

Inspection of Abbey College, Ramsey

Abbey Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire PE26 1DG

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Abbey College are happy, kind and friendly. Their interactions with adults and other pupils are very respectful. It is normal to open doors for others, or to listen carefully while pupils express their thoughts. Pupils understand that other people may have different views or beliefs. They have the knowledge and skills they need to discuss differences with confidence and maturity.

Routines are clearly understood and followed. Pupils benefit from an orderly, calm environment. Pupils queue up sensibly at the start of the day and before lessons. They move around the school very considerately. Transitions between lessons and social time are made in a calm manner. Pupils have a variety of different areas to use at social time. They can sit and talk with friends, or go outside to play games such as football. These established routines ensure that pupils feel safe.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, know that the adults have high expectations of what they should achieve. They are well prepared to realise their potential because they study a rich and varied, well-taught curriculum. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the leadership opportunities that are open to them once they finish school, and how to achieve them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has ensured that pupils study an ambitious curriculum that is well suited to their needs. There are a broad range of subjects that pupils benefit from. For example, the vast majority of pupils study Spanish until Year 11.

Within the curriculum plans, the skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn are clearly mapped out. Teachers have the appropriate subject knowledge to teach the curriculum well. Teachers routinely check what pupils remember and understand. Teachers are skilled at adapting their teaching if there are gaps in what pupils remember. In a few instances, a small number of teachers are not as skilled in delivering the curriculum as the school intends. This means a minority of pupils do not achieve as highly as they should.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils who are at the earliest stage of learning to read receive expert support that is precisely matched to their needs. Dedicated staff are well trained in a range of strategies, such as phonics teaching or paired reading, to ensure that pupils quickly learn the skills they need to read fluently and with confidence.

There are clear processes to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They are well trained to adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEND. Their adaptations are closely matched to pupils' needs. Where required, pupils benefit from a calm learning environment outside of class called 'The Bridge'. Here, they receive specific support which ensures they are ready to learn. As a

result, pupils with SEND access the school's ambitious curriculum, achieve well and keep up with their peers.

The school has a clearly understood behaviour policy that teaches pupils how to conduct themselves well. Within lessons, disruption is rare. If it happens, pupils respond well to the support they receive to manage their behaviour in future. Staff are generally consistent at implementing the rules. This ensures that pupils feel a sense of fairness in how they are treated.

Students in the sixth form benefit significantly due to an ambitious curriculum and expert teaching. The school has very high expectations for what students should achieve. Staff know their students well and monitor closely how well they are doing. They quickly intervene if a student is struggling. This means students keep up. Students speak passionately about the varied and interesting careers guidance they receive. They are extremely well prepared for future study or work.

Pupils, including post-16, benefit from a rich and diverse personal development curriculum, which is carefully designed to meet their needs and to prepare them for life after school. The school has carefully considered how to develop pupils' character as well as their skills and interests. There are a wide range of enrichment opportunities on offer, which the majority of pupils participate in. Pupils are actively involved in the wider community. Pupils gain resilience and confidence. They talk with pride about the additional skills they learn that prepare them well for their adult lives.

Governors fulfil their role and statutory duties with skill and dedication. They support and challenge leaders to ensure that all pupils are at the centre of their decisions and actions to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are a few instances in the curriculum where teachers do not have the full range of skills to deliver the curriculum in the way that the school intends. When this happens, curriculum content is not taught as well as it should be. Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities to clarify, or further deepen, pupils' understanding. The school needs to ensure that all staff are sufficiently supported and trained to deliver lessons that enable all pupils to make good progress throughout the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137377
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10282901
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,044
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Madeleine Jackson
Headteacher	Andy Christoforou
Website	www.abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school receives support from Meridian Trust.
- The school currently uses two alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, modern foreign language (MFL) and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the school special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and scrutinised SEND support plans from a sample of pupils across different classes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also reviewed documentation relating to school improvement work.
- An inspector held discussions with a representative from Meridian Trust, which provides support to the school.
- An inspector held a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's behaviour and attendance records and met with leaders with responsibility for these areas.
- An inspector met with leaders responsible for pupils studying an alternative curriculum or who are in alternative provision.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils from different classes across both days of inspection.
- The lead inspector considered the 215 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 109 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered 45 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff, and 82 responses from pupils to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
James Fuller	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Shapland	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector

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